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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/004,259	11/01/2001	Toshikazu Takase	116-011833	3750

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EXAMINER

CROSS, LATOYA I

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1743

DATE MAILED: 12/14/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/004,259	TAKASE ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	LaToya C. Younger	1743	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 September 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 9-11, 18-20 and 26-32 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 12-17 and 21-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

This Office Action is in response to Applicants' remarks filed on September 26, 2005. Claims 1-32 are pending. Claims 9-11, 18-20 and 26-32 are withdrawn from consideration as being directed to non-elected subject matter.

Withdrawal of Rejections from Previous Office Action

- The anticipation rejection over Ohishi et al is withdrawn in view of Applicants' argument that that the reference fails to teach a solvent-removing means for evaporating solvent from the sample.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

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3. Claims 1-8, 12-17, 21-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US patent 4,835,707 to Amano et al in view of US patent 5,762,877 to Brewer.

Amano et al disclose an automatic analysis method and apparatus. The apparatus comprises a sample rack (2) for retaining sample tubes. The sample tubes are held by chuck (9), wherein the sample tube is carried to each of the individual stations. At col. 9, lines 55 - col. 10, line 9, Amano et al teach a dilution dispenser (22), a sampling pipetter (23) and reaction mixture dispensers (25A, 25B, 25C). The sampling pipetter (23) is equivalent to Applicants' claimed sample aspirating/dispensing means. The apparatus also comprises an ultrasonicator, magnetic stirrer (41) and a heater with a temperature controller (4a). As a solvent dispensing means, Amano et al teach solvent adding apparatuses (5, 6, 7) which add solvents of different kinds to the sample tubes (col. 7, lines 60-67). Amano et al further teaches that analysis of the sample takes place by HPLC (col. 3, lines 53-65). The entire apparatus is controlled by computer (13).

Amano et al differ from the instant invention in that there is no disclosure of a solvent-removing means.

Brewer teaches a sample concentrating device whereby solvent from a sample is evaporated in order to concentrate the sample. To evaporate the solvent, Brewer teaches using gas from a gas source traveling a predetermined flow rate to a heat source. The heat source heats the gas to a predetermined temperature and the gas further flows over the plate containing the sample/solvent mixture. The flow of warmed gas over the sample/solvent mixture causes the solvent to evaporate leaving the concentrated sample behind. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate a solvent-removing means into the system of Amano et al to evaporate the solvent from the sample and provide a concentrated sample for analysis.

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Response to Arguments

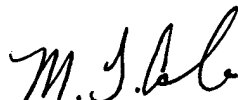
4. Applicant's arguments with respect to the pending claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to LaToya C. Younger whose telephone number is 571-272-1256. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 10:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill A. Warden can be reached on 571-272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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MONIQUE T. COLE
PRIMARY EXAMINER